

Buddhist Churches of America

Volume 1

**75 year History
1899-1974**



75

BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF ALAMEDA
2325 Pacific Avenue, Alameda, CA 94501



Area served by Buddhist Church of Oakland, 1906;
temple established: January 4, 1916.
Incorporated: January 4, 1916.

Temple Building/Meeting place:

Pre WWII:

1. As branch of the Oakland Buddhist Church:

- a. August 12, 1912: rented storefront location at 1630 Park Street, Alameda, CA.
- b. April 8, 1914: rented a large room in mansion of Edward Kimberlin Taylor, former mayor of Alameda, located at 2325 Pacific Ave., Alameda.

2. After independence from Oakland Church:

- a. January 4, 1919: purchased Taylor mansion and land at 2325 Pacific Ave.
- b. June 1925: Social Hall and kitchen were constructed; private home adjacent to the mansion was purchased to serve as minister's residence; second floor of temple remodeled into meeting rooms for YBA.

During World War II:

Temple used by U.S. Navy Dept. as a place to train its employees and enlisted personnel.

Post WWII:

1. 1945 to 1947, temple became temporary hostel for returnees from the relocation camps.
2. 1958, Alameda Gakuen (Language School building) and property deeded to temple.
3. 1959, School building demolished and 8-unit apartment building built.
4. 1961, new minister's residence constructed.

WWII Evacuation:

1. Some moved to other areas of California by Feb. 24, 1942.
2. Others who did not leave freely were forced to move first to Tanforan Assembly Center; San Bruno, CA, May 1942; then, to Topaz Relocation Center, UT.

3. Rev. Motoyoshi was arrested by the FBI and sent to Lordsburg Internment Camp, NM, 1942; transferred to Santa Fe Internment Camp, NM, 1943; then, rejoined his family and temple members at Topaz Relocation Camp, Mar. 22, 1944.

Affiliated organizations established:

1. Fujinkai, Feb. 4, 1906; reorganized as Alameda Temple Fujinkai, Sept. 1915; reactivated 1947.
2. Language school, 1907.
3. Seinenkai (YMBA), 1914; reorganized 1916.
4. Joshi Seinenkai (YWBA), 1921, merged with YMBA to form YBA, 1947.
5. Komyo Club (young girls), 1930.
6. Shonen Club (boys), 1933; merged with Komyo Club to form Junior YBA.
7. Kayo-kai (young married couples), 1936.
8. Sunday (Dharma) School, Feb. 1916; reactivated 1947.
9. Sonenkai (young adults), ca. 1950; changed to YABA (Young Adult Buddhist Association).

Branches/ areas served:

1. Dharma School branches started in Castro Valley, Irvington, and Centerville, July 1932.*
2. Eden YBA, May 26, 1934.*
3. Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church (SACBC), May 26, 1961; independent, Apr. 8, 1965.

* Because of increasing improvements for travel, the Temple no longer needs to maintain separate Dharma schools (7 schools in pre-WWII period) in the neighboring areas.

Ministers:

1916-1920	Shisei Shinohara	1954-1960	Giko Abiko
1920-1928	Koryu Iino	1961-1979	Eiyu Terao
1928-1932	Shojun Taguchi	1977-1983	Ryo Imamura
1932-1948	Joshin Motoyoshi	1983-	Zuiken Taniguchi
1948-1953	Shozen Naito		

Temple Presidents:

1916	Matsutaro Nakata	1947	Yasutaro Takano
1917	Genuemon Yamamoto	1948-1949	Zentaro Ota
1918-1921	Kazuo Matsubara	1950	Yasutaro Takano
1922	Kumagoro Takagi	1951	Takeshi Yamashita
1923	Shujiro Nakano	1952-1954	Bunju Marubayashi
1924-1925	Kumagoro Takagi	1955	Kazuo Mori
1926	Umetaro Kondo	1956	Yasutaro Takano
1927-1929	Tsurukichi Tanaka	1957-1958	Naoyoshi Kuge
1930	Umetaro Kondo	1959-1960	Kazuo Mori
1931-1933	Shujiro Nakano	1961	Naoyoshi Kuge
1934	Sadakichi Hayashida	1962	Bunju Marubayashi
1934 (1/2)	Sadakichi Hayashida	1963	Hiroshi Hashimoto
1935 (1/2)	Seiichiro Nogami	1964	Yasuo Yamashita
1936	Matsutaro Sugiyama	1965-1966	Yutaka Nakayama
1937	Shujiro Nakano	1967-1968	Hiroshi Hashimoto
1938-1941	Yasutaro Takano	1969-1970	Masao Nakano
1945-1946	Hideo Yamashita	1971-1973	Noboru Okada

Buddhist Temple of Alameda

Alameda, California

The Buddhist Temple of Alameda had its beginning in 1906 when Rev. Mokujo Fujii, then resident minister of the Buddhist Church of Oakland, came periodically to Alameda to officiate at funerals and other religious services. Early in 1912, Rev. Gyodo Haguri, also affiliated with the church in Oakland, began to hold regular Howakai services in Alameda at the home of Matsutaro Sugiyama. About this time, under the leadership of Matsutaro Nakata, a group of sixteen Buddhist faithfuls—Kumagoro Takagi, Chiyokichi Abe, Magoichi Yamasaki, Katsutaro Iwaihara, Matsutaro Sugiyama, Shujiro Nakano, Kumajiro Kanzaki, Tsunezo Minami, Nobutaro Yamamoto, Umetaro Kondo, Chujiro Yamaguchi, Shokuro Hayashida, Tsurukichi Tanaka, Fukujiro Asada and Montaro Otsuka—proposed establishment of a permanent site where religious gatherings could be held. On August 12, 1912, a storefront location at 1630 Park Street was rented for this purpose; thus developed the concrete

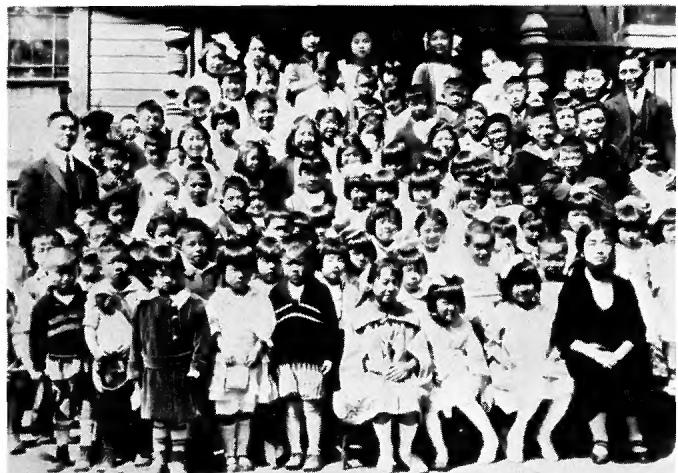
beginning of the Buddhist Temple of Alameda. This first location was on the main (business) street in Alameda and conveniently situated so as to be accessible to the Issei Buddhists, the majority of whom lived in the proximity of the business district.



1630 Park Street 1912-1914



Chapel at 1630 Park Street



Sunday School—1922

CONTINUED GROWTH

Soon need for bigger quarters arose and on April 8, 1914, a large room in an old Victorian mansion owned by Edward Kimberlin Taylor, a former Mayor of Alameda, was rented for \$10.00 a month. (This structure, located at 2325 Pacific Avenue, is the present site of the Temple). Without a resident minister, the local group remained under the guidance of the church in Oakland. At the annual general meeting on January 4, 1916, however, a decision was made to have the Alameda group become autonomous; thus, in February of the same year, the group under the name of Ashi Bukkyokai, was formally and officially established. Its first resident minister was Rev. Chisei Shinohara, with a congregation numbering approximately sixty.

BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF ALAMEDA FORMED

Under the leadership of Rev. Shinohara, the Temple launched a movement to canvass the outlying areas in the southern Alameda County district in order to seek new members. This proved to be successful in that a substantial number of families from Hayward, Castro Valley, San Leandro, Mt. Eden, Centerville and Irvington became members. It was at this time that, with the increase in membership and activities, the name of the church was officially changed to the Buddhist Temple of Alameda. It was also at this time that the Temple concluded an understanding with the Buddhist Church of Oakland to place the area extending from San Leandro to Warm Springs under the auspices of the Alameda Temple.

Thus, beginning in 1916, the Temple initiated programs where active participation by the new members in the outlying areas would be possible. The Temple sent its ministers, lay leaders and Sunday School teachers to the communities in the southern Alameda County district to hold religious services as well as social activities for the Buddhists. Sunday School services were also started for the children, and this was to culminate into eventually becoming an integral part of one of the largest, if not the largest, Sunday School in the Bay Area at that time.



Fujinkai—1922

TEMPLE FACILITIES ENLARGED

On January 4, 1919, the Victorian mansion in which the Temple had been renting space and the land on which it was situated, consisting of 7,125 square feet, was purchased for the sum of \$4,400.00, with an additional \$2,000.00 spent for remodeling. The three-story building was divided so that the main floor and a portion of the second floor were used for Temple purposes; the remaining area of the second floor was converted into a residence for the minister and his family; and the third floor was used for storage space. The steeple was converted to a bell tower.

With the growth in membership, it became necessary to enlarge the Temple facilities. Therefore, in 1926, a social hall was constructed at a cost of \$6,125.00, where benefit movies could be held, as well as other assemblages. At the time of its completion, it was considered to be one of the most modern of its kind with a seating capacity of 300 persons. In addition, a sizable stage was constructed for members to present local talent shows and shibai. A much-needed kitchen was built adjoining the social hall, also.

A private home near the mansion and situated on the same grounds was eventually purchased to serve as a residence for the minister and his family. With this latter acquisition, the second floor of the Temple was remodeled into conference or meeting rooms for the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMB) and the Young Women's Buddhist Association (YWBA). The entire building thus was used exclusively for Temple activities.



Young Men's Buddhist Association—1925

During this period and following, under the vigorous leadership of Revs. Chisei Shinohara, Koryu Iino, Shojin Taguchi and Joshin Motoyoshi, a total of seven Sunday Schools were established under the auspices of the Temple. In the 1930's the Temple flourished and, by 1936, the number of Sunday School children affiliated with the Temple numbered 560. Full participation was undertaken by them in all religious and church-related activities at the local as well as Bay District level. These included devotional meetings, conferences and various sports activities (the Alameda Girls' Basketball Team having the distinction of capturing several Bay District championships). As in most other Buddhist churches during this period, the policy-making body of the Temple was made up mostly, if not entirely, of the Issei members. However, the Nisei members, still in their teens and early twenties, were becoming active in the local and Bay District Temple activities.



YWBA Basketball Team—1938

ACTIVITIES CURTAILED DURING WW-II

The growth of the membership continued under Rev. Motoyoshi and increased activities took place until December, 1941, when the start of World War II and all its implications changed the picture drastically. Travel restrictions and curfews were imposed upon the Japanese community, thus curtailing any type of community activities. As Alameda was considered to be a restricted area, all aliens (Issei) were ordered to leave the city by February 24, 1942. This resulted in members' families moving to other areas scattered throughout California. By May, all remaining persons of Japanese ancestry were ordered out of Alameda and sent to Tanforan Assembly Center in San Bruno. Subsequently, the members were interned among ten relocation centers located throughout the United States, and thus the Temple ceased to function. Inasmuch as many of the members were relocated to Topaz, Utah, they still remained active as a group under the guidance of Rev. Motoyoshi and assembled together for religious services and social activities.

The Temple in Alameda was taken over by the U.S. Navy Department during the war for use as a training school for its employees and enlisted personnel.

In September, 1945, after the West Coast was reopened to persons of Japanese ancestry, many Alamedans returned to their home city. Since the Temple was still technically under the jurisdiction of the United States government, some difficulty was encountered in regaining possession of its property. However, through the efforts of Hideo Yamashita, this was accomplished, and immediate plans were made to convert the social hall into a temporary hostel where returning evacuees could stay until housing could be found. With the return of Rev. Motoyoshi and many of its members, the Temple was reactivated at this time.

By late 1947, the housing crisis had eased, and the use of the hall for hostel purposes was terminated. Gradually, as more and more former Alameda residents returned to the area, and with the addition of newcomers, various organizations were reactivated according to age groups, such as the Fujinkai, Sonenkai and YBA; and Sunday School and Issei services were again resumed on a weekly basis.

In 1948, Rev. Motoyoshi was transferred to the Fresno Betsuin as Rimban and, at that time, Rev. Shozan Naito was assigned to the Temple. He remained until 1953 when he was assigned to the Buddhist Churches of America Headquarters in San Francisco. In 1954, Rev. Giko Abiko became the resident minister and served until 1960.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS SYSTEM

In 1956, the method of governing the Temple was changed to the Board of Directors system with a

chairman to be elected from this Board. Gradually, there was a reorganization in the administration with the Nisei assuming the responsibilities of leadership from the Issei. It was also in 1956, that the 40th Anniversary of the inception of the Temple was observed. It was decided by the Board of Directors to celebrate this memorable occasion and to pay tribute to the elderly Issei members, who were instrumental in the growth of the Temple. Yasutaro Takano was appointed as the General Chairman for this occasion, and, together with the committee members, efficiently directed this anniversary event to a successful end. The Buddhist ministers in the Bay District and representatives of their respective churches were in attendance. A Japanese garden, designed by the well-known landscape architect, Nagao Sakurai, was constructed by the members of the Sonenkai in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the Temple. Also, improvements in the Hondo, (viz., hardwood floors) were made.

In 1958, the property on which the Alameda Gakuen (Japanese School building) was situated was deeded to the Temple. Subsequently, the Gakuen was demolished and an 8-unit apartment house was built on its site (in 1959) as a source of future income for the Temple.

In 1961, a new residence was constructed for the minister and his family. Rev. Eiyu Terao was then assigned to the Temple.

In 1963, an unexpected crisis confronted the Temple and threatened its existence. The City of Alameda had proposed an urban renewal program of the business district covering a 20-block area, which included the Temple property. All lands within the designated area were to be purchased by the City and the City was to relocate the displaced property owners to a comparable property at another location. The Temple delegation attended many City Council meetings on this subject to voice their dissent along with other similarly minded groups. Fortunately, in a subsequent city election, the measure was defeated.

Another important milestone was celebrated in 1966, marking the 50th Anniversary of the Temple, under the chairmanship of Yutaka Nakayama and his committee. In commemoration of this significant event a reception room was constructed adjoining the Hondo.

During the 50-year existence of the Temple, it has been honored with visits by Renshi Shojo Ohtani in 1934, and by Lord Abbot Kosho Ohtani in 1952 and 1959 during their tours of the Buddhist Churches in the United States.

At the present time, Sunday School services and classes are held every Sunday morning for the young people (preschool through high school age), followed by a service in Japanese for the Issei members. For each Buddhist holiday, such as Hanamatsuri, Obon, Ohigan, Fujimatsuri and Hoonko, a Family Service is held with the Sunday School children, their parents

and young adults, with an English-speaking minister or lay person delivering the sermon.

The Obon Festival and Food Bazaar is a two-day affair held in August, when the colorful ondo is performed around the picturesque Japanese garden. Because of the publicity given to this affair in the local newspaper, this event is well attended by the general public and favorably received.

Another event in which all of the members participate is the fund-raising carnival and bazaar, that is held annually in June. This is a two-day affair featuring games and Japanese foods and attracts a sizable number of Caucasian visitors who enjoy the Japanese cuisine.

The facilities of the Temple are available for use by various clubs, such as Shigin, Karate, etc.

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

With respect to all of the organizations affiliated with the Temple, the oldest is the Bukkyo Fujinkai. This club initially was formed by a group of women in 1906, even before the formal establishment of the Temple itself. After several years, however, activities were suspended until 1915 when it was again reactivated. This group was the backbone of the Temple due to the influential position the members held in their respective families. Their work in the improvement and growth of the Temple continued until the wartime evacuation. In the postwar years, a decision was made to have two Fujinkai groups—one for the Issei and the other for the Nisei. However, in 1958, due to the advancing age of the Issei women, it was agreed that the two groups merge, with the Nisei women taking over the reins of the Fujinkai cabinet. This is the present format of the organization.

In 1914 the Bukkyo Seinenkai was formed, dissolved, and again activated in 1916. This group consisted of young men in their teens and twenties. In 1917 a baseball team was formed, this later developed into the Alameda Taikukai. Eventually the name of the club was changed to the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA). Their counterpart, the Bukkyo Joshi Seinenkai (Shojo-kai), consisting of young women in the same age group as the above-mentioned men's group, was formed in 1921, with the wife of the resident minister as its advisor. Its name, however, was changed to Young Women's Buddhist Association. After World War II, both groups combined, and the Young Buddhist Association (YBA) was formed.

For the younger grade school age group, the Komyo Club was formed for the girls in 1930 and the Shonen Club (Alameda Buddhist Boys' Club) for boys in 1933. These two groups eventually merged and became the Junior Young Buddhist Association.

In order to accommodate the young married couples, the Kayo-kai, now defunct, was formed in 1936.



Joshi Seinenkai—1921



Sonenkai—1954



Keirokai—1967

During the postwar period the Sonenkai was organized with the same purposes as its predecessor Kayokai, and later changed the name to Doshinkai. Some time thereafter, the Young Adult Buddhist Association (YABA) was organized for the young married couples to continue their affiliation with the Temple.

Today, as we look back some fifty-odd years since the establishment of the Temple, our hearts are filled with pride at the progress of the Temple and its spiritual enrichment in our daily lives. We are grateful to our pioneer parents who, with their wisdom and hardship, sowed the seeds of Buddhism in Alameda, where we, of this generation, are enjoying the fruits of their endeavors. From the humble beginning of 60 members in 1916, the membership of the Temple has grown to 150 families (approximately 400 persons).

Although in this present age young people of all religions, including Buddhism, may have become disinterested in the church, we look forward to the day when the future of Buddhism in Alameda, as well as the entire United States, will flourish to even greater heights.

MINISTERS AND PRESIDENTS

Ministers and years served:

Shisei Shinohara	(1916-1920)
Koryu Iino	(1920-1928)
Shojin Taguchi	(1928-1932)
Joshin Motoyoshi	(1932-1948)
Shozen Naito	(1948-1953)
Giko Abiko	(1954-1960)
Eiyu Terao	(1961-present)

*Ryo Inamori
Zen Kai Taniguchi*

Presidents and years served:

Matsutaro Nakata	(1916)
Genuemon Yamamoto	(1917)
Kazuo Matsubara	(1918-1921)
Kumagoro Takagi	(1922, 1924, 1925)
Shujiro Nakano	(1923, 1931-1933, 1937)
Umetaro Kondo	(1926, 1930)
Tsurukichi Tanaka	(1927-1929)
Sadakichi Hayashida	(1934, half of 1935)
Seiichiro Nogami	(half of 1935)
Matsutaro Sugiyama	(1936)
Yasutaro Takano	(1938-1941, 1947, 1950, 1956)
Hideo Yamashita	(1945, 1946)
Zentaro Ota	(1948, 1949)
Takeshi Yamashita	(1951)
Bunju Marubayashi	(1952-1954, 1962)
Kazuo Mori	(1955, 1959, 1960)
Naoyoshi Kuge	(1957, 1958, 1961)
Hiroshi Hashimoto	(1963, 1967, 1968)
Yasuo Yamashita	(1964)
Yutaka Nakayama	(1965, 1966)
Masao Nakano	(1969, 1970)
Noboru Okada	(1971-1973)
Kiyoshi Naito	(1974)-

(History Committee: Masao Nakano - chairman, Joseph Iwataki, Yasuo Yamashita, George Tsuchiya, Mrs. George Tsuchiya, Mrs. Shiro Takeshita, Bunju Marubayashi, Zentaro Ota, Takashi Takahashi and Hideo Yamashita)

— Ichiro Nishida 1976-77-78, 87-88
— James Kurotsu 1979-80
— Kaz Sato 1984-90
— MAS TAKANO, 1991-92
— RON NAKANO, 1993-94
— DON AKIYAMA, 1995-96-97